



MATTHEW J. DRISCOLL, *President and CEO*



**For Immediate Release:** June 12, 2014  
**EFC Contact:** Jon Sorensen | 518.402.6924 | 518.956.2297

## **Green Stormwater Project Helps Protect Finger Lakes Museum from Recent Flooding Around Keuka Lake**

### **\$381,000 Grant from New York State's Green Innovation Grant Program Among \$2.3 Million in State Funding Awarded to Regional Museum**

Recent flooding around Keuka Lake did not reach the Finger Lakes Museum in Branchport thanks to an innovative stormwater management system funded by New York State.

The former Branchport Elementary School, which now serves as the main building on the Museum's Discovery Campus, was not flooded during last month's storm which dumped 10 inches of rain in a 72-hour period, according to John Adamski, president of the Museum's Board of Trustees. That was due to a series of water-cleansing "bioretention" rain gardens, which are designed to capture, cleanse and soak in roadway runoff and large volumes of water. By collecting water and allowing it to soak in to the ground, these bioretention areas absorbed the high flood water, keeping the water away from the museum, Adamski said.

During the storm, "We experienced floodwater and debris floating across the property," Adamski said. "But we were spared at our Branchport location because of the bioretention and new storm drainage system that we had constructed with the help of the (New York State) Environmental Facilities Corp. If not for the bioretention practices, we would have had significant flooding in the building. Fortunately, there was none."

The bioretention system (a series of depressions with plants and a specific soil mixture that, cleanse stormwater as it moves toward Sugar Creek and then Keuka Lake) were among several eco-friendly stormwater projects selected for funding by the New York State Green Innovation Grant Program (GIGP). Administered by the New York State Environmental Facilities Corp., GIGP funding is awarded through Gov. Andrew Cuomo's Regional Economic Development initiative. The Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council included the Finger Lakes Museum in its regional development plan for 2011, resulting in \$381,000 in GIGP funding, along with nearly \$2 million in funding from the Empire State Development Corp. and the State Office of Parks Recreation & Historic Preservation.

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## Green Stormwater System Protects Museum – Page Two

Flooding in the museum's main structure might have delayed the opening of summer programs on the Discovery Campus, which are set to begin July 1. As the region's first environmental education center, the Museum's Discovery Campus is an exciting new destination for the Finger Lakes, offering summer kayak paddling programs for both kids and adults, which will be supervised by New York State licensed guides and wildlife educators.

In a statewide competition for GIGP funding, the Finger Lakes Museum was selected for its proposal to build an innovative and interpretive stormwater management system, including a porous pavement parking lot which will absorb rainwater and reduce the amount of polluted runoff entering nearby Sugar Creek, along with bioretention areas, a green roof and a rainwater harvesting cistern.

Steve Griffin, CEO of the Finger Lakes Economic Development Corp. said, "The Regional Council's support of The Finger Lakes Museum and the financing provided by Governor Cuomo's economic development initiative are important steps in our efforts to capitalize on the natural resources that bring thousands of tourists to the Finger Lakes each year."

EFC's award-winning Green Innovation Grant Program (GIGP) will have \$12.6 million available this year for green stormwater infrastructure projects. GIGP funding will be part of Round 4 of New York State's Regional Economic Development Council initiative with up to \$750 million available in state economic development resources. Businesses, municipalities, not-for-profits and the public can begin applying for assistance from dozens of state funding programs, through a single Consolidated Funding Application, for job-creating and community development projects.

"New York's economy is on a come-back in large part because we have adopted a grassroots approach to economic development that is creating jobs and growing new industries across our state," Governor Cuomo said. "The Regional Councils are working and we plan to continue that success with the fourth round this year. I look forward to seeing the new projects that the regions come up with as we continue to grow our economy and put New Yorkers back to work."

The deadline for all applications is Monday, June 16th at 4 p.m.

GIGP applicants are strongly encouraged to work with their Regional Council to align their project with regional goals and priorities. The 2014 REDC Guidebook and list of available resources will be accessible at [www.regionalcouncils.ny.gov](http://www.regionalcouncils.ny.gov).

For more information on Green Innovation Grants, please visit EFC's [GIGP application page](#).

Another \$2 million is available for Engineering Planning Grants (EPG) for municipalities considering wastewater infrastructure projects. Wastewater Infrastructure Planning Grants will provide up to \$50,000 to municipalities of more than 50,000 residents and up to \$30,000 for smaller communities. For more information on Wastewater Infrastructure Planning Grants, please visit [DEC's website](#).